



The Jewish

# Gaily Forward

Cheshvan + Kislev + Tevet 5771 ■ November + December 2010

## What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

### High Thanksgiving Interfaith Service

NOVEMBER 23, 7:00 PM

Join with our neighborhood faith communities for a service of praise, prayer, and song from our many faith traditions. See pages 4-5 for details.

### Hanukkah Party

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 6:00 PM AT JONATHAN ADLER BOUTIQUE

Mark the Annual World AIDS Day with festivities for the first night of Hanukkah. For details, visit <http://www.jewishfed.org/event/chanukah-oh-hanukkah>

### Siddur Sha'ar Zahav –Reflections

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17,

7:00–9:00 PM

An interactive session, facilitated by Arthur Slepian, will explore the impact of our Siddur and ponder future endeavors. See pages 4-5 for details.

### Cantor Unplugged IV: Broadway Night with a Little Yiddishkayt

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 8:00 PM

Join Cantor Sharon Bernstein and friends as they wanders through the (American) (Jewish) (Gay) song-book.



## Blessing Diversity at Home and in Israel

**T**his fall, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is reaching out to two very different communities. In the Bay Area, congregant Andrew Ramer has led an initiative to "twin" our synagogue with the Pacifica Institute, a Turkish-Muslim organization based in Burlingame. In Israel, congregant and former Congregation Sha'ar Zahav President Arthur Slepian has reached out to LGBT Jews, creating a new organization, A Wider Bridge, to join the U.S. and Israeli LGBT communities.

CSZ is committed to a spiritual practice that honors and supports diversity. We remember that God created human beings "*b'tselem Elohim*," in God's own image, and that our diversity of sexual and gender affinities, of bodily shapes and colors, of thoughts, feelings and beliefs, are all part of the Oneness we affirm each time we recite the *Sh'ma*.

During the weekend of November 5–7, CSZ will be welcoming members of the Pacifica Institute and of Israel's Orthodox LGBT community to our synagogue. Please turn to page 13 for more information about our twinning project with our Muslim neighbors, and to page 12 to find out about the panel discussion brought to us by A Wider Bridge.



# Rabbi's Study



*To be is to stand for....*  
— Abraham Joshua Heschel

**REFORM JUDAISM** stands for certain things.

When the Religious Action Center articulates a position taken by the Reform Movement it does so "on behalf of 900 Reform congregations in North America, with a membership of 1.5 million members." The language is subtle, without appearing to be so, because it frames the size and strength of who the RAC represents. The RAC does not claim to speak for each individual Reform Jew, but rather to present the positions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism. Each of these organizations has a clear mandate and process for taking public policy positions.

I am privileged to sit on the Commission for Social Action, the Board of the Religious Action Center. I accepted this position two years ago, and it requires me to travel twice a year, and to work, via conference call, in between trips with a group of dedicated reform Jewish leaders, lay and professional. I have just returned from the Gulf Coast, where we convened our fall summit.

Usually, we meet in Washington, D.C. at the RAC. However, Rabbi David Sapperstein and Mark Pelavin wanted us to be in a place where our gathering could take on more meaning. In addition to our regular commission business, task force meetings, and plenary time, we had a unique opportunity to visit the region and explore the significant environmental and energy policy issues at stake. We met with experts and bore witness.

As you well know, the oil spill in the Gulf is the worst environmental disaster to ever hit the U.S. At least 140 million gallons of oil have been unleashed already, devastating the water, beaches, sea life, and regional economy.

We have the opportunity in this time of crisis to be among those who stand up and organize justice for all beings, including those unable to advocate on their own behalf –

beings such as trees, streams, rivers, oceans: the universe wrapped in the wondrous ribbon of divine light.

I will be sharing more with you as our national social action agenda continues to emerge out of our discussions. In the meantime, I hope you'll help me to consider how to make good on the Call to Action I announced in my sermon at Kol Nidre. Between now and *Tu B'shevat*, the new year of the trees, I would like us to engage in some collective projects of *teshuvah* and of *tikun olam*, as we ask forgiveness from the earth.

Let us support and encourage each other as we ask what we're doing in this vital work of repair – at home, at school, at work, in our shul, in all of our communities.

From the closing section of our *siddur*, *Chesed v'emet* (Remembrance), we find these chasing words:

*Arson, oil spill, nuclear disaster, deforestation, strip mining, toxic waste, urban sprawl, and war – all the workings of our mangling hands. God who made this world and called it good, is there any comfort for me now, in my rage and pain, as I watch us destroy it? We have good counsel. Help us to know that we have the power to make a difference before it is too late.*

— Andrew Ramer

I hope you'll join me November 2 at 7:00pm, for the first of my monthly Spiritual Practices Check-in. We will consider all sorts of practices that help us feel connected to our covenantal relationship and treasure trove of spiritual wisdom. We'll talk, we'll practice, and we'll end with *Shema*, helping us to attune ourselves to the Oneness that permeates all time and space.

## Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

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Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, and the San Francisco Organizing Project



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# Flying at 10,000 Feet



I HAVE Simchat Torah on my mind. I know, you're most likely thinking about Chanukah (depending on when you're reading this, Chanukah's either coming up or is just over), but I'm writing this at the beginning of October, just days after a wonderful

Simchat Torah celebration at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav. We had a great time, dancing with the Torahs, listening to the klezmer band, hearing first the end of our communal Jewish story and then the beginning—a reminder that ours truly is the never-ending story, passed on *l'dor v'dor*, from generation to generation, and added to by each generation.

What I enjoyed most about the service was watching the children who were there—our next generation. Some had already had their bar or bat mitzvah, some hadn't yet, but they participated fully in the service—one playing with the klezmer band, others dancing with the Torah, bright smiles on their faces. Now I don't know, maybe their parents had to drag them to synagogue, maybe they whined all the way there and all the way home. But at least while they were there, they were active members of our community (and, truth be told, even I sometimes whine about having to go to synagogue).

And when I watched them run onto the bimah for an aliyah, I had no doubt that we were doing something right. These children knew, without question, that they belonged at the center of the Jewish people, that the Torah, the story of the Jewish people, was theirs. *L'dor v'dor*.

The service, with all of the people together in community, also reminded me of a couple of months ago, when I was at a Friday night service and Cantor Bernstein was one of the co-leaders. It was Rosh Chodesh, and so Cantor Bernstein announced the new month. As she sang the blessings and led us in the prayer, I suddenly felt as if I was standing in the town square, the marketplace, called away from my everyday life to pay attention to the changing of the months, one of the miracles of creation. This was a very different experience than turning the page on my calendar. This was not just about marking time; this was about community.

And I began thinking about how many Jewish rituals and practices are meant to take place in public where people gather. Think about how we read Torah. It's read out loud, so even the illiterate can participate. Then someone teaches about what was read, again very publically so everyone can learn. Imagine this being done, not on a bimah in a quiet sanctuary, but in the middle of a busy town square, with children running back and forth, a group of adults standing off to the side, sharing the latest gossip, someone else running up late, hoping to not miss the communal remembrance of the dead, and, a little ways away, street vendors hawking their goods... Uh, actually, that does sound a bit like our sanctuary, doesn't it?

An online dictionary defines "sanctuary" as "a sacred place; a consecrated spot; a holy and inviolable site." It is also "a sacred and inviolable asylum, a place of refuge and protection; shelter, refuge; protection." But what makes a place a sanctuary, a holy spot, a safe space? I think wherever we come together as a community—to pray together, to learn together, to support each other, to have fun together or just simply to be together—that place becomes a sanctuary. So the Herbst Theater at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Dolores Park where we built a *sukkah*, someone's living room in the East Bay on the second Friday of each month are all Congregation Sha'ar Zahav sanctuaries. Even Facebook can be a sanctuary of sorts: Our members gather there to share news, spread ideas, celebrate each other's *simchas*, and offer support in hard times—just because it's virtual doesn't mean it can't be a sacred space.

Have a great couple of months, and I hope I'll see you at one of our sacred spaces.

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Volume 33, issue 3



# What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

(continued from page 1)

## Meetings

### CSZ-SFOP Organizing Committee Meeting

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

Join us in building relationships and pursuing justice. Our current focus is how we can help improve state government so that more money will be available for health care, education and other worthy causes. There are many ways to be engaged, to develop leadership and relationships, to ACT. Be in touch and find the right fit for you. For more information, please contact Dana Vinicoff at [vinicoff@hotmail.com](mailto:vinicoff@hotmail.com).

### Welcoming Committee Meeting

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 7:00 - 9:00 PM**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 7:00 - 9:00 PM**

Please join our vibrant, revitalized group as we work to make Sha'ar Zahav the most welcoming environment it can be to both new and longstanding members. Have an idea that you want to contribute? Simply want to build community amongst fantastic people? Come! For more information, please contact Jim Acerra, [jacerra@msn.com](mailto:jacerra@msn.com) or Shelli Rawlings-Fein, [shellimf@yahoo.com](mailto:shellimf@yahoo.com).

### Va'ad Meeting

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 6:45 PM**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 6:45 PM**

All are welcome to attend and listen to Sha'ar Zahav's monthly board meeting with its pre-set agenda.

## Chavurot

### East Bay Chavurah

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 6:45 PM**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 6:45 PM**

Sha'ar Zahav members and their guests are invited to Sha'ar Zahav's East Bay Chavurah, held the second Friday of every month. Our evening begins with blessings and a vegetarian/vegan potluck. At 7:30, adults and teens continue our Shabbat experience with some meaningful text-based Jewish dialogue. To RSVP or host a future event, please contact Jessica Israel Cannon at [jjisrael68@yahoo.com](mailto:jjisrael68@yahoo.com).

### Second Sunday Cinema

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 5:00 PM**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 5:00 PM**

Settle in for a cozy screening of classic films with fellow Sha'ar Zahavniks, followed by a lively discussion facilitated by Jim Van Buskirk, bon vivant, raconteur, and cinephile as well as co-author of *Celuloid San Francisco* and *Gay by the Bay*. We'll darken the oneg room and provide the popcorn and beverages. Feel free to bring your own snacks. Help us launch this pilot project by spreading the word. Free to CSZ members, \$5 public.

### Post-Oneg Social Group

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 9:00 PM**

After welcoming the Sabbath at Sha'ar Zahav's Friday night services, we invite you to join the Post Oneg Group for a pay-your-own-way dinner at a local restaurant. We welcome all current, prospective, or new members. For more information, please contact Jim Acerra at [jacerra@msn.com](mailto:jacerra@msn.com)

### Service Leaders Chavurah

The Service Leaders Chavurah is a dynamic group exploring prayer and service leading techniques, meeting monthly. If you are interested in joining, please contact Cantor Sharon Bernstein at [cantorbernstein@gmail.com](mailto:cantorbernstein@gmail.com).

## Services

### Muslims and Jews Together: Confronting Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism

**NOVEMBER 6, 10:15 AM**

For our Shabbat morning service, we will pray together with our Muslim relations,

learning about their sacred texts, teaching about ours, and then sharing a festive meal that will allow us to begin to get to know each other.

### Thanksgiving Interfaith Service

**NOVEMBER 23, 7:00 PM**

Join with our neighborhood faith communities for a service of praise, prayer, and song from our many faith traditions. We will be collecting nonperishable food items (no glass please) so that we may donate to those in need. Co-sponsored with Mission Dolores, San Francisco Zen Center, First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, The Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist, California Institute of Integral Studies, Metropolitan Community Church, The Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, and First Mennonite Church of San Francisco.

### Klezmer Shabbat

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 8:15PM**

Join us on Shabbat Hanukkah to light candles, sing songs, delight in familiar synagogue tunes melded with klezmer rhythms and melodies, dance, and, of course, eat and drink! Cantor Sharon Bernstein will join with master klezmerim Stuart Brotman on bass and Sheldon Brown on clarinet, with Bruce Bierman leading us in dancing through the service (and beyond . . .) Childcare provided starting at 8:00pm

## Classes

### Torah without Gloves: Digging Deep and Getting Dirty

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 4 THROUGH NOVEMBER 29, EIGHT SESSIONS, 6:45 - 8:00 P.M.**

\$64 members and \$80 non-members for the series of eight classes.

This is a class not *in* Biblical Hebrew, but *about* Biblical Hebrew. You'll learn how the language works, without having to learn the language. Taught by Rabbi Dev Noily. Contact: [regina@shaarzahav.org](mailto:regina@shaarzahav.org) to register.

### Jewish Spiritual Practices Monthly Check-In

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 7:00 - 8:30 PM**



Here is a chance to cultivate and experiment with more mindfulness practices and to create spiritual friendship and companionship. Each time we meet, we will meditate, share insights and challenges, meditate a little more and end with calling out the Shema. Led by Rabbi Camille Shira Angel on the first Tuesdays of the month.

### **Mindfulness and Meditation**

A meditation chavurah is forming to start this fall. We plan to meet monthly on Shabbat mornings during Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer time (so parents can more easily participate) at a near-by member's apartment. We will meet in the CSZ lobby at 10:15 a.m. and then walk together to his apartment for our shared practice. To be on an email list for updates on this chavurah, please contact Shoshana Levenberg at shoshie7@sbcglobal.net.

### **Siddur Sha'ar Zahav –Reflections**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 7:00 - 9:00 PM**

It's been over a year since we published our Siddur –time for us to look at its creation process, its effect on our lives, its impact at CSZ and the way its publication has changed our relationship to the world beyond our Mishkan. This interactive session, facilitated by Arthur Slepian, will explore these questions and ponder future endeavors, such as a companion High Holy Day Machzor.

### **A Year-Long Journey Towards the High Holy Days**

Do you arrive at the Days of Awe feeling unprepared for the work ahead of you? Do you wish you understood our liturgy and traditions more deeply? In a year-long journey to the High Holy Days, we will meet monthly to learn about the major themes of the High Holy Days, and to explore the rich trove of historical liturgy in our tradition, and to re-interpret the liturgy in a queer-positive, gender-neutral, truly egalitarian spirit that reflects our congregation's diversity and shared values. Please watch your email and Shabbat Shalom handouts for specific dates & times.

**Choosing Judaism: A Discussion Group**  
**SUNDAY NOVEMBER 21, 12-2 PM,**

**AT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY LIBRARY**  
**TUESDAYS DECEMBER 21, JANUARY 18, FEBRUARY 15, 7:00-9:00 PM, AT CSZ**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 5 (SHABBATON) AT CSZ**  
For people who are considering or are in the process of, to Judaism, and those who have recently converted. Topics will include questions of identity, community, and family. This class is not an introduction to Judaism, but rather a place to ask questions and discuss issues with others on this journey. **Please note:** This group will not be open to new participants after the second session in December. Facilitated by Rose Katz, Andrew Ramer, and Ora Prochovnick. Please contact the CSZ office with any questions.

### **Planning for Retirement, Caring for your Senior Loved Ones**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7TH, 6:00 PM**

What's on the Horizon: Exploring Future Housing Options, will be the second in our seminar series. As we try to plan for our own retirement or for our senior loved ones' needs, we discover how much we have to learn. Join Marjorie Fielding of A Place for Mom, and Nancy Meyer of Zephyr Real Estate for an informative session as we discuss this important topic. Please RSVP to CSZ at 415-861-6932.

**Jeffrey A. Miller Scholar in Residence**  
**A House in Order: Are You Prepared?**  
**JANUARY 21-23**

Among the most caring of activities that we can complete for our loved ones is to ensure that our wishes about healthcare and end-of-life issues are made known and put into writing. Rabbi Anne Brener, LCSW, will be the Jeffrey A. Miller Scholar in Residence throughout Shabbat. The CSZ Chevre Kadisha (Holy Burial Society), along with additional CSZ members, will answer your questions on Sunday concerning health care directives, powers of attorney, wills and trusts, and additional practical and spiritual issues.

## **Events**

### **Hanukkah Party**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 6:00 PM AT**

**JONATHAN ADLER BOUTIQUE**

Mark the Annual World AIDS Day with

festivities for the first night of Hanukah. Our free to the community party, co-sponsored by the Bay Area LGBT Alliance and CSZ, will include a dinner spread, Hanukkah kitsch survival kits, music, drinks, silent and live auctions, entertainment, and a candle lighting at 7:30. For details, visit <http://www.jewishfed.org/event/chanukah-oh-hanukkah>

### **Games Day**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 12 – 5:00 PM**

Have a fun, relaxing afternoon of games and Chinese food! We'll meet in the Oneg room after services, and play some provided games—including Jewish Apples to Apples—but feel to bring mahjong, Scrabble, Monopoly, Settlers of Catan, Pinochle, Spades, Twister, whatever you have and love... Not into games? Join us anyway to chat and kibbitz. Please bring \$5 to defray the cost of vegetarian Chinese food (or send it to the office prior to the event) and bring other food, snacks, and drinks to share. Questions? Contact Jim Accerra at [jacerra@msn.com](mailto:jacerra@msn.com) or Shelli Rawlings-Fein at [shellimf@yahoo.com](mailto:shellimf@yahoo.com)

### **Cantor Unplugged IV: Broadway Night with a Little Yiddishkayt**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 8:00 PM**

Join Cantor Sharon Bernstein as she throws off her cantorial persona and wanders through the (American) (Jewish) (Gay) songbook with friends.

### **Music in the Mishkan**

**SUNDAYS, FEBRUARY 6, MARCH 13,**

**AND MAY 8, 4:00PM**

Save the date! Details in the next JGF.

### **Congregational trip to Israel and Palestine**

**APRIL 28-MAY 11, 2011**

Our third Israel Trip will be led by Rabbi Camille Shira Angel. This trip will be a chance to experience for ourselves the land, its blessings and its challenges. The trip will include opportunities for daily spiritual practice, Shabbat celebration, community and fun. An educational series for the trip is in development.



# Why Jewish Education?



## WE OPENED

our first day of school this year with a parents' meeting, which included a moving discussion about why we

provide Jewish education to our children. Many parents spoke about their own Jewish education. For some, their own painful experiences left them unsure whether they wanted to subject their children to anything similar.

This question is so important that we are going to begin to address it through discussions at Shabbat Simcha and in other ways as well—keeping the dialogue going all year. This article is another way for me to give some insights into the importance of Jewish education. I hope that the following sampling of insights will reassure parents that they are making an important and meaningful decision in their children's lives by giving them the opportunity to learn about their history, culture and religion.

**Freedom.** I always try to illuminate for my students that they are living in a unique time in history—a time where they have the freedom and safety to study Judaism and to live their lives safely as Jews. Often I ask them what it would be like if they didn't have access to the Jewish texts and learning environments. I don't discuss this with them to create a context where their Judaism is based on fear or deprivation but to help them appreciate their mazel. I love what Zoe Kaiser said a few years back: "You could take the actual Torah away from me, but you could never take all the values and ethics I have learned in the Torah."

**Mitzvot.** It is the highest priority mitzvot to teach your children Torah and Jewish literacy because knowing where we come from helps to shape who we can become. The stories in the Torah and other Jewish texts may seem antiquated but the values in the narratives are still salient. Fulfilling this

mitzvot means there will be another generation of Jews who can pass knowledge on to their children. It teaches them that there are responsibilities for Jewish people that go beyond those of any citizen in the world. It is my hope that we demonstrate that this is a beautiful mitzvah, one that adds value for the students' minds and souls.

**Tikkun Olam.** In a world of Facebook and tweeting and Wii, our youth are distracted by media that lack depth. We hope that in the family system and school they will learn the importance of social justice and accountability to the world. However, that asks a lot of school and family. Young people need additional environments to help to form their sense of social responsibility. This emphasis on social justice is the cornerstone of BSPM's curriculum. I have watched many of my students grow up to make social justice their life passion. They will often recount how they began to shape this passion in their Jewish classes and retreats.

These are just some of the ways in which Jewish education is important. Let us continue the discussion, add to it, write new midrashim, refine our intention and continue to ask questions. I know I look forward to it.

## FAMILY CALENDAR

### Friday Night Live

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 6:00 PM**

Calling all Kids! Bring yourselves and your favorite grown-ups and celebrate Shabbat with us. Designed for children 0 to 6 years, but all are welcome. Our Friday Night Live service will be followed by dinner in the Oneg Room. We will provide pizza (sponsored by parents), but we encourage you to bring a vegetarian dish to share with the community as well. FNL continues on the first Friday of the month during the school year, with a special service for December 3—see below.

### Shabbat Simcha

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 10:15 AM**

Shabbat Simcha will include a festive and innovative service led by Cantor Sharon Bernstein at 10:15–11:15 am. Learning tracks will include Meditation, Text study, Parenting workshops, a Sacred Journey workshop for 5771. Then join us for a festive oneg!

### Friday Night Spirit

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 5:45 PM Snacks,**

**6:15 PM Service, 7:00 PM Free Dinner**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 5:45 PM Snacks,**

**6:15 PM Service, 7:00 PM Free Dinner**

A beginner-friendly service led by Deborah Newbrun of Camp Tawonga, with Isaac Zones and our own Daniel Meyer O'Keeffe on guitar. Targeted for children 6–12 years and their families, but all are welcome. Members are urged to invite their non-member friends to enjoy this fun Shabbat experience.

### Hanukkah Celebration

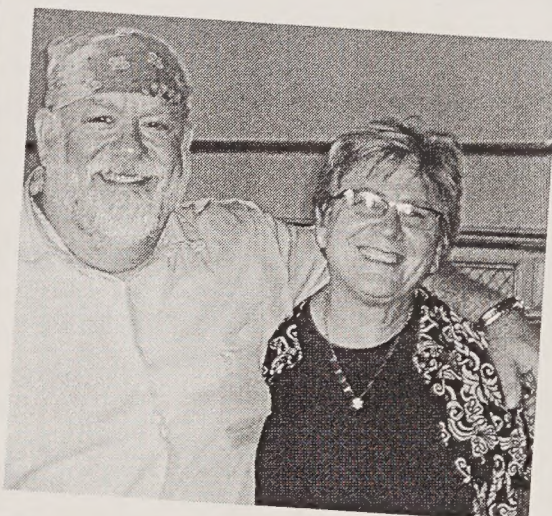
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 6:00 PM**

There will be a Family Service for our youngest members at 6:00 pm followed by pizza in the oneg room. Childcare will be provided starting at 8:00 pm in the large classroom, so that parents may attend Klezmer Shabbat (see page 4)



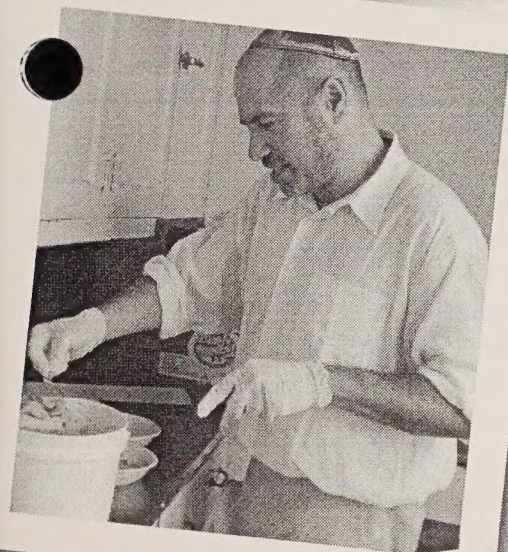
# Behind the Scenes at the High Holy Days

PHOTOS BY REGINA WURST



Clockwise from upper left:

The Mincha Dancers Behind Stage;  
Richard Meyerson and Judith Wolfe working on the Yom Kippur Break-fast;  
The Ushers: Nancy Muller, Josh Muller, Sara Haber and Eileen Lynette; Michael Schaffer preparing the white fish.



Challenge yourself.  
Discover your values.  
Imagine your future.

## Jewish Community High School OPEN HOUSE

October 17 & December 5 • 2-4 p.m.

RSVP at 415.345.9777 x124

1835 Ellis Street | San Francisco | [www.jchsofthebay.org](http://www.jchsofthebay.org)





## CSZ Siddur Bookplates

**Scott Kramer** in memory of his father,  
Herbert Kramer  
in memory of his beloved friend, Kevin  
Best  
in memory of his beloved friend, Alex  
Ortiz  
in memory of his friend, Ed Vacolla  
in memory of his grandmother, Dorothy  
Kramer

### Barbara Parker-Bell

in honor of the wedding of Drew Parker-  
Rose & Flavio Epstein

## General Fund

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of Dianna Robbins

**Allan Berenstein** in memory of John  
Golzbowski, Bernard Pechter, Elliott  
Klein, Jeffrey Miller and Rabbi Ben  
Marcus  
in memory of Jay Feinstein, Bill  
Schlichter, David Kotch and Alex Konski  
in memory of Bernard Levy

**Ellen Berger** in memory of Harvey  
Berger  
in memory of Rayna Gabin

**Michael Bettinger** in memory of Stanley  
Schlesinger

**The Estate of Judy Macks** in memory of  
Judy Macks

**Jonathan Funk** in honor of Alex  
Ingersoll's presidency

**Avraham Giannini** in memory of Mary  
Lou Giannini

**Rabbi Joe Hample & Barry Wendell** in  
honor of all our friends at CSZ

**Ira Hirschfield & Tom Hansen** in honor  
of Alex Ingersoll

**Sherie Koshover** in memory of her  
father, Gilbert Koshover

**Jordan & Carol Levitin** in memory of  
Carol's brother, Frank Hyman

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	24 CHESHVAN 6:45 pm Torah Without Gloves	25 CHESHVAN 7:00 pm Spiritual Practices	26 CHESHVAN	27 CHESHVAN 7:00 pm SFOP meeting	28 CHESHVAN 6:00 pm Friday Night Live 8:15 pm Shabbat Service	29 CHESHVAN 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service Twining Service
30 CHESHVAN 4:00 pm A Wider Bridge	1 KISLEV 6:45 pm Torah Without Gloves	2 KISLEV	3 KISLEV	4 KISLEV 7:00 pm Welcoming Com	5 KISLEV 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	6 KISLEV 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Simcha
7 KISLEV 5:00 pm Second Sunday Cinema	8 KISLEV 6:45 pm Torah Without Gloves	9 KISLEV	10 KISLEV 7:00 pm Siddur Sha'ar Zahav Reflections	11 KISLEV 6:45 pm Va'ad Meeting	12 KISLEV 5:45 pm Friday Night Spirit 7:30 pm Shabbat Service 9:00 pm Post-oneg Social Group	13 KISLEV 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
14 KISLEV	15 KISLEV 6:45 pm Torah Without Gloves	16 KISLEV 7:00 pm Interfaith Thanksgiving Service	17 KISLEV	18 KISLEV Thanksgiving Day, office closed	19 KISLEV Office closed 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	20 KISLEV 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
21 KISLEV	22 KISLEV 6:45 pm Torah Without Gloves	23 KISLEV				



28 KISLEV	29 KISLEV	30 KISLEV 6:00 pm Retirement Seminar 7:00 pm Spiritual Practices	1 TEVET	2 TEVET 7:00 pm Welcoming Com	3 TEVET 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	4 TEVET 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
27 KISLEV 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service Bat Mitzvah of Sue Bojdak	26 KISLEV 6:00 pm Family Hanukkah Service 8:15 pm Klezmer Shabbat	25 KISLEV 7:00 pm SFOP	24 KISLEV 6:00 pm Hanukkah Party @ J Adler	23 KISLEV 6:00 pm Hanukkah Party @ J Adler	22 KISLEV 6:00 pm Hanukkah Party @ J Adler	21 KISLEV 6:00 pm Hanukkah Party @ J Adler
5 TEVET 5:00 pm Second Sunday Cinema	6 TEVET	7 TEVET	8 TEVET	9 TEVET 6:45 pm Va'ad Meeting	10 TEVET 5:45 pm Friday Night Spirit 7:30 pm Shabbat Service 9:00 pm Post-oneg Social Group	11 TEVET 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
12 TEVET	13 TEVET	14 TEVET 7:00 pm Choosing Judaism	15 TEVET	16 TEVET	17 TEVET Office closed 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	18 TEVET 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
19 TEVET	20 TEVET	21 TEVET	22 TEVET	23 TEVET 7:00 pm Minhag Council	24 TEVET Office closed 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	25 TEVET Office closed 7:30 pm Shabbat Service



# Israeli Orthodox Gay Leaders to Visit Sha'ar Zahav as Part of U.S. Tour

## "A Wider Bridge" Brings Leaders of Historic Movement to Bay Area

BY ARTHUR SLEPIAN

**"I**sraeli, Orthodox and Gay." As recently as a few years ago, you would not often here these three words in the same sentence. Today, they still likely provoke a double take—and more: curiosity, conversation, and surprise. Yet over the past few years, a growing number of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals have emerged from within Israel's Orthodox communities, and new organizations have developed to serve their needs. These organizations have grown rapidly and are beginning to shape into a movement, one that by its very nature can only be described as historic for its potential to transform people's lives and create a more open and tolerant Israeli society.

Four of the leaders of this movement will be speaking at Sha'ar Zahav on Sunday, November 7 at 4:00pm. It will be an opportunity to hear their personal stories, and to learn about the new ground their organizations are forging in Israeli society. The Israeli visitors are here on a speaking tour of the United States sponsored by A Wider Bridge, an organization I recently founded with the support of a number of CSZ members and others. A Wider Bridge promotes greater engagement of LGBTQ Jews with Israel, and greater connection between the U.S. and Israeli LGBT communities.

The speakers—Asaf Lebovitz, Bracha Koren-Haftke, Eyal Lieberman, and Zehorit Sorek—are among the founders and leaders of Bat Kol, an organization for orthodox lesbians, and Havruta, a gay men's orthodox organization. Havruta, established several years ago as a part of Jerusalem Open House, serves the needs of Orthodox gay men in Israel. The organization has grown from a handful of members to its present size of more than 300. Bat Kol also has 300 members, all of whom are struggling with the difficulties of being lesbian, sometimes still closeted, and staying committed to their religion. It provides support groups, social events, a speakers' bureau, telephone hotlines, counseling and programs for teenagers, and most recently, welcoming places for religious LGBT Jews to worship and celebrate the holidays and Shabbat. Together, Havruta and Bat Kol have created The Pride Minyan, which develops

prayer services and holiday celebrations designed to be a welcoming place for religious LGBT Jews. In 2010, it organized a Pride Shabbat (or Shabbat Ga'avah) that was held in Tel Aviv the same weekend as the Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade, to which it also sent an organized contingent of Orthodox Jews carrying a banner that read 'Kehilah Datit Ga'ah'—Proud Religious Community.

Among the hallmarks of our thirty-three year journey here at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav are celebrating "Pride Shabbat," marching as Jews in a Gay Pride Parade, and praying together as a community of LGBTQ Jews. Now Orthodox Jews in Israel are forging their own path down a very similar road. What an exciting opportunity for us to share our experiences and learn from theirs. In this way, we will help build a stronger LGBTQ Jewish movement worldwide, one that enables Jews of all denominations to live openly as Jews and LGBTQ people.

The fact that these LGBTQ Jews are Orthodox makes their work all the more historic in the context of Israel, where the Reform and Conservative movements are not yet sizeable, and where a state-sanctioned Orthodox Rabbinate controls many parts of life that we in America would never imagine being the provenance of religious leaders. Yet, Israeli society—and its attitudes about the relationship of homosexuality and religion—is being slowly but inexorably transformed, in part by the courage and visibility of this growing community of LGBT Orthodox Jews.

The Sunday afternoon panel discussion is co-sponsored by A Wider Bridge, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav and the LGBT Alliance of the Jewish Community Federation.

For more information, please contact me, Arthur Slepian, A Wider Bridge Executive Director, 415-987-5119, [aslepian@pacbell.net](mailto:aslepian@pacbell.net), or Josh Weisman, A Wider Bridge Program Director, 415-823-8530, [joshweisman@gmail.com](mailto:joshweisman@gmail.com).







# The Weekend of Twinning at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

BY ANDREW RAMER

**W**e read in the Torah that Abraham's sons, Ishmael and Isaac, buried their father together. Today, the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael have the opportunity to birth something together—increased communication, dialogue, and a new shared community in this country and around the world.

Two years ago in November, 50 mosques and synagogues across North America participated in the first annual "Weekend of Twinning."

A year later, in 2009, 115 Muslim and Jewish communities in North America and Europe joined to study, pray, and get to know each other better. This year there will be an even greater number of twinned communities in Europe, North America, South America, and Africa.

We're pleased to announce that this year for the first time, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav will be participating in this world-wide Week-

end of Twinning—with the Pacifica Institute, a Turkish-Muslim community center based in Burlingame. In preparation for the weekend, Sha'ar Zahav members have met with representatives of the Institute and shared a Ramadan break-fast. On two other evenings, several Pacifica Institute members came to Friday night services with us, and afterwards gathered together to pray in our chapel.

The theme of this year's Weekend is "Confronting Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism." The weekend's sponsor, the Center of Ethnic Understanding, wants us to understand that bigotry against any Muslim or Jew is an attack on all Jews and Muslims. At a time when misunderstandings, bias, and even acts of violence against both our communities are on the rise, we have a golden opportunity to join together as a spiritual family and stand together in a united front. Your participation in the Weekend of Twinning is an excellent time to do the work of *tikkun olam*, global healing and repair.

For our first service, on Shabbat morning, we will be praying together with our

Muslim friends, learning about their sacred texts, teaching about ours, and then sharing a festive meal that will allow us to begin to get to know each other. In the coming months, we plan to do a joint social action project, and will be inviting families and individuals in our two communities to share meals and meet informally. We will also be creating opportunities for our Beit Sefer children and their children to meet, study, and play together.

As Rabbi Angel taught us during the High Holidays, it is time for us to start thinking as our Native American forebears on this continent did: "How will this action effect our children and their children, down to the seventh generation?" This year's Weekend of Twinning is another step toward thinking, acting, and living in this spirit of world connection and spiritual union. Join us on Saturday, November 6 at 10:15am for a history-making service, and look for more information about future programs with the Pacifica Institute in the weeks and months to come.



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**High Holidays**

See the Donations section for High Holi-  
days 5771 Sponsorships

**Second Sunday Cinema at CSZ**

Settle in for a cozy screening of classic films with fellow Sha'ar Zahavniks, followed by a lively discussion facilitated by Jim Van Buskirk, bon vivant, raconteur, and cinephile as well as co-author of *Celluloid San Francisco* and *Gay by the Bay*. We'll darken the oneg room and provide the popcorn and beverages. Feel free to bring your own snacks. Help us launch this pilot project by spreading the word. Free to CSZ members, \$5 public.

**NOVEMBER 14, 5:00PM**

**The Front (1976, 95 min. color, Martin Ritt)**

Woody Allen plays a man of no real talent or strong political convictions who is paid to be a front for a group of black-listed writers during the McCarthy period during the early 1950s. There are comedic elements in his attempts to pass off as his own stories he hasn't read, until he comes

under the scrutiny of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. Zero Mostel, Herschel Bernardi, Andrea Marcovicci, and Michael Murphy costar in this provocative exploration of a devastating period in Hollywood's history.

**DECEMBER 12, 5:00PM**

**Einstein of Sex (2000, 100 min., color, Rosa Von Praunheim)**

This biopic portrays the life story of Magnus Hirschfeld, the pioneering German Jewish doctor and gay social-ist who established the field of sexology and fought German anti-sodomy laws in the late 19th century. Directed by maverick gay director, Rosa von Praunheim, the film follows Hirschfeld and his friends as they establish the First Institute of Sexual Sciences in Berlin in 1920, and follows their attempts to keep it open, until the rise of the Third Reich in the mid 1930s.



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## Life Cycles

Mazel tov to **Morey Lipsett** on his bar mitzvah on August 14.

Mazel Tov to **Patrica Lin** on the birth of her niece, Abigail Lin Weissleder. Abigail was warmly welcomed into the world by her mother, Patricia's sister Erica, her father Eric, and her brother Joshua on August 26.

## New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members to our congregation:

Katie Booser and Catherine Logsdon, and their son August  
David Feder  
Glenda Gutierrez and returning member, Scott Graham  
Fred and Helga Hahn  
Luke Schemmel and Jonathan Shapiro, and their children Deanna, Elise and Scott  
Annie Tritt, and her children Alisha and Aliea

## Naches

Mazel tov to **Andrew Ramer**, whose new book, *Queering the Text*, received a great review by Lambda Literary.

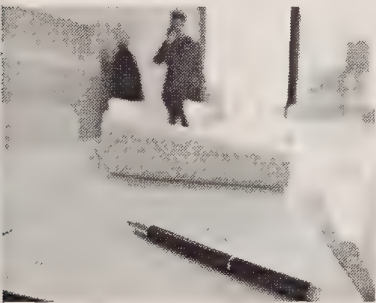
Mazel tov to **Wayne Bender**, who won a gold medal in squash at the Gay Games in Cologne, Germany.

Mazel tov to **Neil Hart**, who recently returned from the Gay Games in Cologne, Germany with four Gold, one Silver and three Bronze medals. In addition to taking home a staggering number of medals, Neil also set meet records for the 1500m and 800m Freestyle and the World Masters Record for the 4x100m Freestyle Relay.

Mazel tov to **Richard Sinkoff**, who also returned from the Gay Games victorious, having won the Bronze medal in the 4x50m Men's Freestyle Relay.

Mazel tov to **Leslie Miessner**, who was recently promoted to Supervising Attorney of the Real Estate Unit at the Administrative Office of the Courts.

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# Minyan Community

**ON MY DRIVE** home from officiating at a wedding in Santa Cruz, I stopped by my cousins' in Palo Alto for a spontaneous dinner. It was a warm autumn evening. Out on their patio, we ate burgers hot off the barbeque, fresh corn on the cob, and salad. Some of my favorite memories are from my cousins' home. For nearly twenty years now I've led seder there. We've enjoyed countless barbeques together. I can recall when each of their sons were infants; the both now tower over me. I am thrilled to have this family nearby. This closeness is made all the sweeter because I come from a small family, due to losses in Nazi Germany.

The seven of us at the barbeque have known each other through a lifetime of events, some jubilant, some mundane, some sad. We have been together at weddings, funerals and two bar mitz-

vahs. My cousins have attended numerous services at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav which I led, and they have been there when I delivered a Rosh Hashanah sermon. Because of my love of leading rituals, they often refer to me (only partly jokingly) as the family's rabbi. Together, we have a sense of togetherness, of beloved community.

In anticipation of writing this column, I had been thinking about the Jewish tradition requiring that ten people (a minyan) be present to recite certain prayers. So, while at the barbeque it occurred to me that if we had decided to pray the evening service together, no one would have looked around the table, noticed that there were only seven of us, and asked me to refrain from including the restricted prayers.

My thoughts concerning what defines a community started at a Con-

gregation Sha'ar Zahav service at which there were only six people. The service leader noted that the traditional minyan of ten people was not present. The Rabbi then explained that the Reform movement grapples with balancing tradition with contemporary realities. She cited a period when some Reform congregations observed Shabbat on Sundays, as that is when most people could attend. The impetuous part of me responded to the Rabbi's comment rather flippantly. I wondered aloud that if it were okay to change things that don't work for us, then why be concerned with minyan at all? Or, why bother keeping kosher? Why even attempt to have a relationship with G-d?

The Rabbi's response was, "What do you make of it?" I misheard her, thinking that she said, "It is what you make of it." Her response, or rather the

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response I heard, was eye-opening for me. What I learned in that moment was that neither Jewish laws nor traditions are of consequence if we perform them mechanically, without being connected to their essence, their meaning.

Which brings me back to the wedding, the barbeque, and minyans. Two years ago I officiated at a wedding for a couple who invited no one. They wanted neither friends nor family to witness what was for them a private and deeply personal moment. Legally they needed one witness in addition to myself. So, I invited one of my best friends to attend. I knew that my friend would respect the couple's desire for privacy while treating the moment with the sanctity and holiness it deserved. For the time we were together that afternoon, overlooking San Francisco under a chuppah of blue skies and bright sunshine, the four of us were indeed a community, a minyan. Just like when the seven of us were sitting around the patio in my cousins' backyard.

In the tradition of 12 step programs, when two or more people are present it qualifies as a meeting. As one person shares, the other person listens. Traditional Jewish teachings state that a range from six to ten people are necessary for a minyan. I would like to suggest that any time Jews come together to pray, they could be a minyan. Therefore, they may choose to recite any prayers, including those prayers traditionally recited only within a minyan for ten.

I believe that the purpose of requiring a minyan is to encourage people to be together. We don't need to concern ourselves with defining the minimum number required for a minyan. Engagement in meaningful prayer becomes our focus rather than following traditional restrictions.

I would like to leave you with this thought, written by Rabbi Reuven Hammer in *Entering Jewish Prayer*: "Religion is not what we do with our aloneness, but what we do with our togetherness."

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## Condolences

We extend our condolences to the following members on the death of their loved ones:

**Lydia Zinn**, on the death of her uncle, ✓  
Harry Mendel

**Anne Bluethenthal**, on the death of her ✓  
aunt, Mina Kempton

**Jeff Rubin**, on the death of his father ✓  
in-law, Clay Bush

**Diane Desmond**, on the death of her ✓  
father, Joseph A. Desmond (father-in-law of **Ilana Bernstein** and grandfather of **Desmond, Anna, Malik** and **Chaltu Bernstein**)

**Steve Polsky**, on the death of his father, ✓  
Norman Polsky (father-in-law of **Mark Oliver**, grandfather of **Gabriel Oliver-Polsky**)

**Susan Tubbesing**, on the death of her  
aunt, Phyllis Cohen

**Rabbi Joe Hample**, on the death of his  
father, Stoo Hample

**Lydia Zinn**, on the death of her aunt,  
Ida Lowenthal

**Laura Lowe**, on the death of her step-  
father, **Harold Fried**

**Diana Buchbinder**, on the death of her  
mother, **Helen Buchbinder** (mother-in-law of **Jeane Redsecker**, grandmother of **Aaron Buchbinder**)

## Member Yahrzeits

### November

- 3 Forrest Kincade
- 3 Harvey Levine
- 7 Donald Albert
- 11 Bruce Apter
- 11 Sidney Rosenthal
- 16 Chuck Norton
- 22 Tristano Palermino

### December

- 4 Marilyn O'Keeffe
- 9 Nicholas Papadopoulos
- 18 David Glassberg
- 20 Norman David Kramer
- 21 Walter Palmer
- 22 Elijah Michael Silverrod MacLachlan
- 29 Allan Craig

## Please Be in Touch With Me

I am eager to be in touch  
with all members of  
the CSZ family  
whenever there are  
occasions of joy or sadness  
in your lives.

Where there is a death  
in the family, please call  
me as soon as possible.  
We very much want to  
be there with you  
at a time of grief.

*Rabbi Camille  
Shira Angel*

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